



# STATE OF IOWA

CHESTER J. CULVER, GOVERNOR  
PATTY JUDGE, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
EUGENE I. GESSOW, DIRECTOR

## Memorandum Division of Child and Family Services

**To:** Interested Parties  
**From:** Mary Nelson, Division Administrator  
**Date:** December 8, 2008  
**Subject:** Update on the foster care Request For Proposal (RFP)

The Department of Human Services last provided an update on the group care RFP to our partners and other interested entities in January 2008. At that time, we indicated that we had decided to suspend work on the group care RFP until calendar year 2009. We noted that this would enable both DHS and private agency staff to place priority on implementing the other service changes in a way that best met the needs of the children and families we serve. It would also allow us to use the lessons learned from these changes in the final design of the group care RFP.

Over the last four years, DHS has implemented competitively selected contracts for many of our child welfare services, including:

- Community Care
- Shelter Care
- Resource Family Recruitment and Retention and Peer Support
- Safety Plan Services
- Family Safety, Risk and Permanency Services
- Drug Testing

Collectively, implementing these new contracts has led to significant changes in the child welfare system for both the Department and its provider partners, and each continues to adjust and adapt to these changes.

Over the last year, we have actively listened to stakeholders and legislators share their views about system and Departmental capacity, the importance of assuring that new services and contracts advance in a way that best meets the needs of the children and families we serve, and that future procurements allow sufficient time for potential bidders to develop a clear understanding of an RFP's expectations in order to prepare quality proposals.

In 2009, we will engage in conversations with key stakeholders, including service providers, county attorneys, Juvenile Judges, parents and youth involved with the foster care system about the role of group care in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, as well as appropriate outcome measures and performance payment structures for group care providers. Our plan would be to issue the RFP only after we have developed a broader consensus on these issues.

In the interim, we will publish quarterly updates to keep providers and other stakeholders informed on the discussions. We will also work with stakeholders to explore inclusion of best practice expectations and outcome based performance measures within current and newly executed group care contracts.